

# **SYNCHRONIZING SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS AMONG FORWARDING AGENTS USING A SERVICE MANAGER**

## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A method of obtaining instructions for routing a packet is described that includes

5 receiving a packet having a packet flow identifier that includes a packet source IP  
address, a packet destination IP address, a packet source port, and a packet destination  
port and checking whether the packet flow identifier matches a stored instruction. If the  
packet flow identifier does not match a stored instruction, whether the packet flow  
identifier matches a stored criteria is checked and if the packet matches a stored criteria,

10 the packet is forwarded to a service manager.